



Canada's

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM: AGRICULTURE STREAM

10 Myths vs Reality

Canada's horticulture sector is reliant upon access to labour to pick and process fruits and vegetables. As access to enough labour is limited domestically, growers depend upon programs such as the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) Agriculture Stream to ensure their product is getting to market and not going to waste. Welcoming men and women from around the world, the TFWP Agriculture Stream allows those who are coming to Canada to earn an income for a better life for their families back home the opportunity to do so. **It truly is a win-win.** Despite this, there are some myths about the program.

Here are 10 myths about the Temporary Foreign Worker Program Agriculture Stream and the reality that exists.

- 1 MYTH:** *Workers are being denied healthcare.*

REALITY: Employers must always pay for the TFW's private health insurance. Coverage must begin from the time the TFW arrives in Canada until the worker is covered by the appropriate provincial/territorial health insurance plan.*
- 2 MYTH:** *Workers are kept in sub-standard housing.*

REALITY: Employers must provide proof that the on-farm or off-site housing has been inspected by the appropriate provincial/territorial/municipal body or by an authorized private inspector with appropriate certification from the relevant level of government.*
- 3 MYTH:** *Workers are subject to abuse with no opportunity for complaint.*

REALITY: The federal government maintains an Integrity Office that is accessible to every worker, employer and the general public. Reports can be made anonymously via the tip line and will result in investigations. If an employer is found to be guilty of abuse of workers, they can be fined, imprisoned or excluded from hiring foreign workers.
- 4 MYTH:** *Employees are denied the opportunity to receive Employment Insurance (EI) benefits.*

REALITY: An employee may receive EI benefits while they are living in Canada. Under the previous government, a change was made which no longer allowed EI benefits to be paid to a worker once they had return to their own country.





- 5 MYTH:** *Workers don't have any choice in accepting a contract.*
REALITY: The employer must prepare and sign an employment contract. In the event that differences arise between the employer and the TFW, the contract will guide the resolution of disputes. In cases where the dispute cannot be resolved between the two parties, the employer or the TFW may contact the Ministry of Labour in the province/territory where the work is being performed.*
- 6 MYTH:** *Temporary foreign workers are taking jobs from Canadians.*
REALITY: Employers are required to conduct recruitment efforts to hire Canadians and permanent residents before offering a job to a temporary foreign worker. Employers must advertise the position for a minimum of 14 days. Often these positions go unfilled by Canadians causing employers to seek alternatives overseas.
- 7 MYTH:** *Employees don't have access to workplace safety.*
REALITY: Employers must arrange and pay for workplace safety insurance coverage. The coverage obtained by the employer must correspond to the TFW's arrival date in Canada. Employers using pesticides or other hazardous chemicals must follow provincial/territorial rules. They must notify workers of pesticide and chemical use and provide workers with protective equipment, training and supervision where required by law.*
- 8 MYTH:** *Temporary workers should become permanent Canadian residents the moment they arrive in Canada.*
REALITY: Under the Agricultural Stream, TFWs hired in higher-skilled positions such as: management, professional and technical occupations are eligible for permanent residency as long as they meet all of the immigration requirements set by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) or the Provincial Nominee Program.*
- 9 MYTH:** *The TFWP Agriculture Stream is used by farmers because it provides a cheap source of labour.*
REALITY: Temporary foreign workers must be provided the same wages and benefits as those provided to Canadian and permanent resident employees working in the same occupation.*
- 10 MYTH:** *Workers are really indentured slaves.*
REALITY: Workers sign up for the chance to be employed on the TFWP program voluntarily. There is no obligation to remain involuntarily. Foreign workers access the program as a means to provide a better lives for themselves and their families.*

*Source: <http://www.esdc.gc.ca/>

